

Career Life Balance

Kristin Y. Rozier



Committee on the Status of
Women in Computing Research

NASA
Langley
Research
Center

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Rice
University



My Life

- Full-time PhD student *and* full-time researcher for NASA.
- Work-a-holic, Perfectionist.
- Married $5 \frac{1}{2}$ years so far ...
 - to another C.S. PhD Student.
 - long distance marriage for almost 4 years.
- Hobbies:
 - Dance: Ballet, tap, jazz, Irish, and ballroom dancing: taking class, teaching, watching, performing, choreography, etc.
 - Iyengar yoga.
 - Cycling: touring and long-distance.
 - Volunteering.
 - French language and culture.
 - Visiting museums: Art, Science, Technology.
 - Logic puzzles.



How do I do it?

- Prioritize what's really important.
- Multi-task! Non-work activities accomplish more than one goal.
 - Tap dance: exercise, leadership, communication.
 - Join cycling club with colleagues.
 - Yoga: exercise *and* meditation.
- Get creative! Find innovative ways to tie in things I love in a useful way.
 - Speak French at NASA.
 - Phrase the problem I'm working on as a logic puzzle.
- Ask other people how they do it.
 - The person will probably be flattered.
 - Knowing will de-mystify their life for you!
 - You may learn something helpful and will feel far less inadequate.



Balancing School and Work

- People say to learn when to say “no” but this didn’t work for me.
 - Be careful when saying “no” because it can make your collaborators feel like you’re not a team player.
 - Learn when to say “yes, IF” and point out reasonable concessions which will make a big difference in your work load.
 - Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Remember to give credit.
- Find projects that fit multiple needs.
- Get better at marketing. Make both sides see how what you’re doing is of specific benefit to them.
- Sometimes balance isn’t possible.



Time Management Strategies

- No email Fridays.
- Alternate between extended periods of concentrating on one thing and periods of knocking out lots of small tasks in a row.
- Alternate between telecommuting and going in to the office.
- Don't let meetings carve your day into small chunks of time.
- Organize your To Do List by the amount of time each task will take and practice bin packing your schedule! (NP hard!)
- Read the hardest problem you're working on over again just before you go to sleep.
- Analyze yourself: keep a time journal for two weeks.
- What will happen if I don't do it?
- Don't buy cable TV. If you can, don't have a TV.



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Participate in Work-Related Activities

Go to research group tea's, lunches.

Go to research talks.

- Broaden your horizons.
- Show appreciation to the speaker and participation to your school.
- You learn how to give talks by watching good and bad talks.
- Get ideas for interdisciplinary research projects.
- Think about something *different* for an hour.
- Make important contacts.
- Bring something to read/grading/etc. just in case.

This is a great opportunity; you'll miss it when it's gone.



Volunteering

- Give back, maintain perspective, take an energizing break.
- Really helps the community.
 - Dispel stereotypes.
 - Inform the public about science.
 - Inspire children to follow you.
- Builds your resume.
- Multi-tasking: energizes you, feeds you, gives you a break.
- Better at explaining what you do at multiple levels.
- Better at explaining why your job is important.
- You will get ideas and inspiration from the people you're helping!

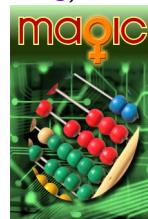


Ways to Volunteer



REAL-TIME AEROSPACE CAREERS

- Judge science fairs.
- Talk at local schools, science clubs, career days.
- Sign up to be a mentor/project advisor. (getmagic.org)
- Tutor at local schools.
- Set up a table at a science museum.
- Help host science festivals/events:



- Sally Ride Science Festival
- Girl Scout Science Day
- Offer tours of your lab to school groups.



Exercise

ACM studies show that people who take a break to exercise actually accomplish more work in total than those who skip the gym and spend that extra hour at work.

Exercise ...

- makes your brain operate more efficiently
- gives you more energy
- reduces your appetite
- reduces your need for sleep
- relieves stress



How Teaching Tap Dance Makes Me a Better Computer Scientist

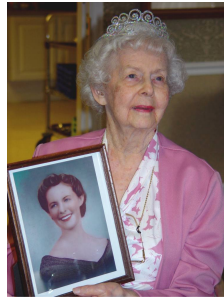


- I have to think on my feet and be spontaneous every week.
- I have better problem-solving skills.
- I'm better at explaining things on multiple levels.
- It helps me improve my confidence, assertiveness, leadership.
- I can take more risks! When I mess up, it's not at my "real job."
- My brain is totally consumed thinking about *something completely different* for an hour.
- I work with all right-brained women and children – totally different from my other job!
- It's rewarding and fun. I leave energized and in a good mood.
- It's great exercise!



Prioritize Family and Friends

- When your grandmother dies, that should be the subject of your research meeting.
- Always make time for your husband. Always take off your wedding anniversary.
- Schedule at least annual visits to *both* your family (ie parents/siblings) and best friends.
- Nurture long-distance friendships as you would long-distance romances.



Strategies for Long-Distance Relationships

- Communication: plan, practice, always increase. Phone, email, and get a web-cam.
- Make a big deal out of anniversaries.
 - We spend a long weekend exploring a new city (especially all of the museums) every year.
- It is tempting to spend the time you are together at family functions, holidays, weddings, etc. *Do not do this!* You need time alone to catch up on communication, not in public.
- Always have your next date on the calendar. Don't let it drift because it will drift forever.
- Be up-front with your advisor and professors. It's a lot easier to keep a date if you've been telling them about it for months.



Long-Distance Relationships Analyzed

Problems:

- Communication necessarily deteriorates. Schedule private time to talk in person; see a counselor.
- It's easy to resent the other person for not being there.
- You can get into a single/independent mind-set.
- Emotionally, it gets *harder*, not easier, with time.

Benefits:

- You will forget the small stuff.
- You will appreciate time together more.
- Absence *really does* make the heart grow fonder.
- You will spend more *quality time* together.
- You will be better at overcoming obstacles together.



What I Hope You Learned

- Prioritize.
- *Multi-task!* Be creative!
- Always make time for exercise.
- Volunteer!



Resources:

My website: <http://shemesh.larc.nasa.gov/people/kyr>

I also recommend talks by Randy Pausch:

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~pausch/>

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